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PROJECT 12, MINICARD TASK TEAM

MINICARD PROJECT

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## I. Introduction

The objective of the Minicard Project Proposal of 25 April 1955 (see Appendix A) is to conduct a large scale test of Minicard in OCR to determine if it is capable of substantially improving CIA's Intellofax System as a principle instrument in support of intelligence research.

The Intellofax System consists of an index of subject and area on IBM cards to intelligence documents on microfilm in aperture cards. Minicard combines the index and the aperture card files on small cards of film so that the "document" is available at the same time its reference is located.

This report outlines the Intellofax and Minicard Systems; describes the present plan for "debugging" the Minicard machinery and for developing operational procedures which will make possible an orderly transition from the Intellofax to the Minicard System; suggests ways of developing the Minicard System as a more useful reference aid; and discusses the specific comments made by the Library Consultants regarding the Minicard Project.

It is outside the scope of this report to determine what documents should be indexed and what specific information in the documents selected should be coded for intelligence research purposes. However, the studies and experiments necessary to increase the "Intellectual level" of indexing and to make use of Minicard's mechanical capabilities must be considered in the light of OCR's over-all responsibility to continually improve its service to its users. The importance of developing adequate codes and properly assigning the codes for indexing and retrieval purposes, must be recognized. If proper codes are not applied, Minicard or any other system can only fail in meeting the needs for which it was designed.

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## II. Comparison of the Intellofax and Minicard Systems

Appendix B is a graphic presentation of the two systems showing "INPUT" and "RETRIEVAL" steps as actually take place in the Intellofax System and are being planned for the Minicard System.

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## II. Comparison of the Intellofax and Minicard Systems

### A. Input

#### 2. Discussion of the Source and Document Number Files.

Experience has shown the need for a source file which will provide the most nearly complete record possible of the Intelligence documentary holdings of the Agency, arranged in a meaningful and logical manner and susceptible of rapid and frequent searches. Present Minicard equipment could not efficiently or economically provide this service. At the present time source cards, each containing selected information about a single intelligence document, are a product of the Intellofax System; but if typing effort now necessary for the preparation of multilith masters, from which source cards are prepared, is to be saved when the Minicard System is put into operation, another method must be devised to provide source cards. Two possibilities are suggested.

1. A file of front pages of each document received, annotated to supply information on enclosures or other data and arranged by source, post, and report number or, when this is not applicable, by any other logical scheme. This would constitute a file providing at a glance the same information now available on each source card; it could be sorted, filed, and used in the same manner as the present file. No delay being necessary for the preparation of cards, this method would result in a source file more current than ever before possible. From time to time older parts of the file could be microfilmed or (3 x 5 microcards prepared and integrated with the present file.)

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2, The second proposal consists of a file by locator and document report number which will appear on an aperture card containing a Minicard image of the document. This system would require more detailed coding of source locator data by the Document Division analyst than is presently being done. When a searcher must determine other information, such as the title of the document, the number of enclosures, or classification, it would be necessary to remove the card from the file for use in a reader. Filing of the cards would perhaps be simplified, but the processing necessary would delay their receipt by the Library.

Neither system would replace the aperture file. Nor should certain arrangements now in effect be discontinued, for example, the preparation of duplicate source cards for certain enclosures, [REDACTED] 25X1X7

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[REDACTED] as well as for their transmittal documents.

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### III. Present Plan for the Minicard System

The current plan for installing the Minicard System which will eventually supplant the Intellofax System consists of (1) a complete mechanical test of all the equipment, (2) the establishment of a pilot Minicard operation and the development of standard operating procedures, and (3) the phasing out of the Intellofax System into the Minicard operation.

#### A. Mechanical Test of Minicard Equipment

When all the Minicard equipment has been delivered, installed and operating (see Appendix B for listing of equipment delivered and on order), a three month's test using all the "hardware" will be made to ensure that all information (and more) in the Intellofax System for a selected group of reports is efficiently retrievable and can be made available to users in a suitable form.

In order to have a large enough group of "minicards" for this purpose, the Machine Division since August 1957 (when the Minicard Camera began operating) has been photographing codes and the related documents for about 60-70% of the CIA information reports being processed into the Intellofax System. The test at the present time is limited to processing master Minicards into the "block" file because the equipment for further processing has not yet been delivered. There were an estimated 10,000 master minicards in file as of 27 January 1958. Approximately 100 master cards are being added each working day. The codes on these cards were mechanically converted from IBM cards in the Intellofax System so it will be possible to make detailed comparisons between the two systems for the group of reports involved. It is interesting to note that the mechanical conversion from IBM cards to Flexowriter tape was made possible

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by the new Flexowriter IBM 024 Key Punch Combination which was specifically developed and built for the Machine Division. This machine makes it possible to process the code "input" into the Minicard System in a more orderly and efficient manner than was originally planned. Instead of using short lengths of Flexowriter tape for each individual document and splicing them together in the same order as the batch of documents to be photographed. IBM cards are punched, verified and sorted into the desired order and the codes are converted to a continuous tape for a specified group. This permits group processing and practically eliminates all coding transcription errors.

B. Pilot Minicard Operation

Coincidentally with the mechanical test of the equipment, a Pilot Minicard Operation is planned to run separate from and in addition to the Intellofax operation using a selected portion of the daily receipts of information reports. This pilot operation will be used as a means of developing policies and procedures for analysis, input, processing and retrieval. It will be under the supervision of a Minicard Operations Committee composed of the Chiefs of the Document and Machine Divisions and the CIA Library. The personnel necessary for this pilot operation should be assigned by the three divisions involved.

The initial phase of the pilot operation will require 1-2 coders, a Minicard camera operator, a Minicard machine operator, a machine program-planner, and a reference librarian in order to process about 75 information reports per work day which is considered enough to start with. It is suggested that the OO-B series of information reports be selected as the portion of daily receipts to test.

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Although the Minicard duplicator, selector, sorter and enlarger-print processor have not been delivered, the "input" phase for this pilot operation should be started immediately so that a file of Minicards can be created which will be large enough for proper testing purposes. This will require the establishment of the Minicard Operations Committee, the writing of specific terms of reference and the assignment of required personnel from the Document and Machine Divisions.

The input for the pilot operation will contain the following additional to that now contained in Intellofax cards:

- a. New area codes
- b. Action codes - new
- c. Phrase coding
- d. Clear test entries.

Action codes, phrase coding and clear text entries will provide for the retrieval of information more specifically and in greater depth than is now possible under the Intellofax System. Briefly, this will be the first step toward the establishment of the more sophisticated system that is made possible by the Minicard method. Furthermore, the pilot operation input will become a permanent part of the file.

As the pilot operation is being conducted, the inherent potential of the Minicard method will become better known. This knowledge will suggest a greater usefulness of the equipment. It will become apparent that the greater flexibility in machine language input of the Minicard will permit the consideration of new methods of indexing and retrieval of information. It is recommended that problems of information retrieval posed by researchers be submitted to the Minicard Operations Committee.

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This Committee will study the problems in the light of their newly acquired knowledge of Minicard potential and will recommend changes in input data to solve such problems. This work will start as soon as sufficient knowledge of the Minicard card potential has been gained and will be conducted concurrently with the Pilot Operation.

During the pilot operation specific operating practices will be developed and standard operating procedures will be written. These procedures will have to cover the entire input, operating, and retrieval aspects.

C. Phase Out of Intellofax System.

As stated above, the initial input into the Pilot Operation will consist of approximately 75 CIA OO-B Information Reports a day. As soon as this operation has been "debugged" and operating procedures have been finally determined, the Intellofax operation for this group of reports will be discontinued. From this point on, other types of CIA reports and other categories of information reports will be introduced into the Minicard system. Simultaneously, the related Intellofax operations for such categories will be discontinued and the personnel now typing, photographing, and inserting microfilm into aperture cards will become available for reassignment to Minicard or other operations. The speed with which this phasing out can be accomplished will depend on how fast personnel can be trained in Minicard operations and procedures.

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